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Senate

The Senate met at 2:15 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, the fountain of all wisdom, make us Your servants. Teach us to listen to Your guidance and to be faithful in doing Your bidding. Give us a spirit of kindness so we will properly represent You. Bless us with the peace of knowing we are doing Your will.

Use our lawmakers. Help them to fully understand how to make right choices. Protect them from danger and empower them to never do anything that will bring them shame. Make them wise interpreters of the signs of the times and undergird them with Your enabling might.

We pray in Your powerful name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 15, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a

Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SUNUNU thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, we are coming in this afternoon rather than this morning, as we did yesterday, following the elections of the Democratic leadership, and today following the Republican leadership elections. Right away I want to congratulate Senators MCCONNELL, LOTT, KYL, HUTCHISON, CORNYN, and ENSIGN, who will represent our Republican Party in our leadership here in this body.

This afternoon the Senate will conduct a period for morning business. As we speak, we are working on an agreement regarding the U.S.-India nuclear agreement and possible progress on appropriations bills. We finished the MILCON bill yesterday and have other bills sequenced and will be able to address those in short order. We hope to be able to schedule votes for later this afternoon. We also need to act on the short-term continuing resolution which has just arrived from the House. When votes are scheduled, Senators will be notified over the course of the afternoon.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3709

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 527, S. 3709, the U.S.-India nuclear bill. I further ask that a manager's amendment to be agreed upon by Senators LUGAR, BIDEN, and FRIST be agreed to as original text for the purpose of further amendment, and that the only other amendments in order be: Ensign regarding inspection, to be considered in closed session; Reed, Levin, Obama, two Dorgan amendments, Feingold, Boxer, Feinstein, Harkin, up to seven Bingaman, Kennedy, and Dodd. I further ask that all amendments except Senator FEINGOLD's be subject to relevant second degrees and that all be related to the subject matter of the bill.

I further ask that once the bill as amended has been read a third time, the Senate then proceed to the consideration of H.R. 5682, the House-passed companion, that all after the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 3709 as amended be inserted in lieu thereof, and that the Senate then proceed to a vote on passage of H.R. 5682 as amended with no intervening action or debate. I further ask that following passage of the bill, the Senate insist upon its amendment and request a conference with the House, the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees, and S. 3709 be returned to the calendar.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this is the unanimous consent about how we will

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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handle the U.S.-India nuclear cooperation bill. We are currently in discussion with a number of other agreements that we are attempting to reach in order to plan out activity both today and tomorrow and possibly Friday. With that, we expect to complete our business this week and then following that we will be out until December 4, or that week of December 4. As we look ahead, because we have a number of issues to address, we will be keeping our colleagues notified on both sides of the aisle. There are a number of issues the Democratic leader and I have outlined that we would like to do before we leave in December.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are a number of amendments that need to be debated. I would hope Senators understand, it is as if it is Friday afternoon at 2:30 and there are 18 or so amendments on here and they have to come and start debating them. We are going to finish this bill before we leave. That is what the majority leader said. I will cooperate with him in any way I can. This is legislation we have been waiting on for a long time. I hope Senators who have amendments will start debating them.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

IRAQ POLICY

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I thank the Chair. I may request to speak for a few more minutes than 5, and when the time comes, I will so inform the Chair.

Last week the American people went to the polls across our great Nation. They went not simply to choose new political leaders, but to ask those lead-

ers—Democrats and Republicans alike—to work together for a new and long-overdue direction in Iraq.

There is no doubt that the majority of American voters want change in an Iraq policy that has brought such death and chaos and the prospect of failure. There is no doubt that they want us to speak honestly about the current failures and boldly about the way through the present crisis. But it is also very clear that Americans are not defeatists. They want success in Iraq, they want our troops to succeed, and they want them to come home.

I note as I speak here there are hearings occurring in the Armed Services Committee. I commend Senator WARNER and Senator LEVIN for holding such a hearing. They heard this morning from some of our leading military figures. This afternoon there will be additional witnesses appearing before them. So I am very conscious that a lot of people are thinking about this issue now and that we hope to come up with some positive suggestions on how we might come to a successful conclusion of this policy—a policy, I might add, that is in deep jeopardy of failure.

In that respect, the message of the American people was one of hope: that years of strained, painful debate can give way to American pragmatism; that leaders can find in national security not a political cudgel but a political consensus; and that Iraq, even now, is not past salvaging, if we right our course immediately.

I hope the resignation of Secretary Rumsfeld is a sign that the White House has heard that message. But I would add very quickly that it is not enough to change the leadership at the Pentagon when a week ago Sunday the Vice President of the United States proclaimed that we intend to go, and I quote him, “full-speed ahead” in Iraq. The President must fundamentally change our Iraq policies if we are to reverse the downward spiral into chaos that threatens the territorial integrity of that country and our larger regional security interests—as well as the success of our war on al-Qaida and international terrorism.

In the midst of an election season, some of America's best foreign policy minds were working diligently to find that new direction. We are lucky to have two distinguished former public servants to chair the Study Group on Iraq: the former Secretary of State James Baker and the former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Lee Hamilton. Their group of experts is striving diligently to find consensus on a set of policy recommendations to put before the President and the Congress of the United States. It is painful work, but it is necessary work. And the tragedy of Iraq—over 30,000 injured troops, hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis dead, more than 2,800 of our fellow citizens in uniform killed—the tragedy of Iraq demands nothing less than a new direction and some new thought.

It will take every dram of our honesty and pragmatism to turn around a society that—despite \$400 billion of taxpayer money, \$250 million every single day and still counting—remains broken, crippled, and fractured. The Iraqi economy is in worse shape today than it was in March of 2003. Electric and water treatment capacity, oil production, access to clean water, are all below prewar levels. America has spent \$14 billion training and equipping 300,000 Iraqi police and security forces; yet today as I speak on the floor of this Chamber, some 23 separate sectarian militias alone operate with impunity throughout Baghdad. Sectarian killings continue largely unabated, averaging scores of deaths a day.

These realities mean that none of us should underestimate the difficulties ahead. We need to recognize—every single time we talk about this matter—the remarkable service being performed by our men and women in uniform. Theirs is a very difficult job. Anyone who has been there, regardless of his or her views on policy, has to admire immensely the courage and determination of these people as they go out every single day, facing the kinds of problems that are everywhere in the streets of Baghdad, Fallujah, and other major urban areas. So I do not underestimate the tremendous burden these people bear every single day, as too often they become nothing more than target practice for those who seek to gain the upper hand in Iraq.

Nor do I underestimate the difficult task facing Jim Baker, Lee Hamilton, and their colleagues on this task force that is determined to find some answers to Iraq. They know, as I do, if there were any easy solutions we would have discovered them by now. It may be that members of the Baker-Hamilton commission will not be able to arrive at a consensus. I hope that is not the case. But I have no doubt that their efforts are taking place in a constructive and bipartisan spirit and we here should do everything we can to follow their example in the weeks and months ahead.

I hope to add briefly to that debate by sharing some of my own thoughts this afternoon. Taken individually, none of these proposals that I am going to discuss are groundbreaking or earthshattering in any way. A sound foreign policy rarely is. But after a war sparked by ideology and grand theorizing, maybe we can once more learn the value of quiet virtues. Taken together, I believe these suggestions might help to reverse the ongoing spiral into violence and chaos, permit the phased redeployment of U.S. troops within and from Iraq, and secure America's regional interests to the greatest extent.

Clearly, our interests are in disrepair, and other regions cry out for attention. We are further away from stabilizing Afghanistan and dealing a mortal blow to our al-Qaida and Taliban enemies. In fact, drug traffickers and